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The World

Editor Lawrence B. Quizon

Russia restores gas flow to Europe

MOSCOW—RUSSIA WAS ATTEMPTING TO restore normal supplies of natural gas to European nations on Tuesday, but its politically-charged gas price row with Ukraine showed no signs of abating.

Several European nations told the trading press Monday that Kiev's gas price row with Moscow, which had turned off its natural gas supply to Ukraine, through which Russian gas also travels on its way to Europe.

"With key exporters such as Germany and France reporting a drop in supplies, Russian energy giant Gazprom promised to increase gas supply to maintain its share of the EU," the news agency said.

Ukraine is a supply bridge with gas according to contracts," Gazprom deputy chairman Alexander Medvedev said, saying by Russian press agencies.

"The consumer remains full supply to Europe in accordance with their contracts will be restored," he added.

Gazprom said it would raise supplies in its export pipeline by 10 million cubic meters a day to make up for Ukraine "stealing" the natural gas bound

for European countries during the winter.

Last Monday, Austria and Hungary separately reported that gas pressure had returned to normal levels on pipelines coming from Ukraine.

Austrian Economic Minister Herbert Kickelbickler expressed satisfaction that Russian Gazprom had kept its promise to restore the supply.

Hungarian President Miklos Jabor said Monday that as a member of the European Union, Austria and the Czech Republic to discuss the crisis and said Kiev would cut off international exports and deliveries to other gas buyers.

EU energy officials will hold a

special meeting on Wednesday to discuss supplies.

Europe imports a quarter of its natural gas from Russia, with 10 percent of those supplies delivered via Ukraine.

The crisis has raised questions among Western officials and Moscow analysts about Europe's dependence on Russian supplies, as well as about Russia's policies in the wake of the 9-11 group of leading nations' decision in 2003.

Hungary had earlier asked a 10 percent drop in Russian gas prices, which it said was not acceptable. Slovakia, Romania, Greece also reported shortages.

In western Europe, Italy saw Russian supplies drop 34 percent and France—which gets 11 percent of its gas from Moscow—lost 42-50 percent.

Germany, Europe's biggest gas importer, also noted disruptions. Although Economy Minister Michael Glos said there was no technical reason for concern for the 17 million German households that use gas heating.

Britain, which has its own, which drilling, gas supplies, does not rely heavily on Russian gas imports.

The row erupted when Gazprom, which controls 80 percent of global natural gas reserves, announced a new price for its

long-term contracts in Europe.

It seems to raise the price in Ukraine from 150 to 160 per 1,000 cubic meters, bringing it closer to the world market price. Supplies from the Russian side, Kiev rejected the price hike.

Ukrainian Energy Minister Yuriy Bohdan said Monday that Ukraine was offering 100 percent to Europe but would not be forced to do so if temperatures plunged below freezing.

As to 40 million people involved in the dispute, Ukraine accused Russia of looking to destabilize its economy, which depends on Russia for about a third of its natural gas imports.

Saddam prefers to die by firing squad

WASHINGTON—JEDIDIAH RASHAD, Iraq's defense attorney, told 100 of his lawyers that if he is sentenced to death for war crimes, he would rather die by firing squad than by hanging. The Washington Times said Tuesday.

"I don't value this life that much. Every human being has his limitations," lawyer Ghazi Chakraborty told them when they met in a basement of a Baghdad apartment building. "I don't have a fear of death."

Chakraborty said he will finance 100 attorneys paid by the US military and the Iraqi government to defend him. He said he would not accept a plea bargain.

"I would consider a trial... I prefer to die by firing squad," Chakraborty said, according to the Washington Times.

Chakraborty, adding that it was "the right way" to ensure a fair trial.

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SADDAM

And he doesn't want anything," he told his two lawyers. "I don't want the life of any one bag to be too valuable than mine." During his last meeting with Chakraborty and Glos, Saddam also asked the lawyers to let him know if he was still alive. Now the US will still a financial loss before, during to mark another "executive" he said, according to Chakraborty.

Saddam also said that US occupation of Iraq would not reach Iraq.

"The Iraq people are not going to let you come in and occupy this. Any aggression will be resisted to the death."

"I would consider a trial... I prefer to die by firing squad," Chakraborty said, according to the Washington Times.



RESCUE workers try to find people under the collapsed roof of a skating rink in Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg district, Tuesday, Jan. 3.

German skating rink collapses, 15 feared dead

BERLIN—A SKATING RINK COLLAPSED IN BERLIN, KILLING 15 PEOPLE, INCLUDING CHILDREN, AND INJURING 100 MORE, OFFICIALS SAID TUESDAY.

The rink, which was built in 1971, was used for ice skating and had a roof that was 15 meters high. It was used for ice skating and had a roof that was 15 meters high.

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It is unclear how many people were injured.

Rescue workers found an injured man in a car that was crushed by the roof. The man was taken to a hospital.

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WORLD BRIEFS

Flash floods kill 15 in Indonesia

YOGYAKARTA—Heavy rain triggered flash floods in Indonesia, killing 15 people and injuring 100 more, officials said Tuesday. The floods hit the coastal town of Yogyakarta, which is a major tourist destination. The floods hit the coastal town of Yogyakarta, which is a major tourist destination.

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UN Hariri probe wants to quiz Syrian president

BEIRUT—THE UN inquiry probing the murder of former Lebanese premier Rafiq Hariri demanded Monday to interview Syrian president Bashar al-Assad after a former deputy implicated him in the assassination.

An inquiry spokeswoman said UN investigators were also looking to talk intelligence Minister Fawaz Fluh as well as former vice premier Abdulhadi Shukhri, who made the explosive allegation after fleeing to exile in Paris.

"We intend to interview Assad, Assad and others, but we awaiting maximum clearance from the Lebanese authorities," said inquiry spokeswoman Mona Hanna.

She added that the commission expects to meet Shukhri "as soon as possible" after his commitment to interview with Al-Arabiya television to which he agreed Assad withdrew, citing health last month before the meeting.

"This is the immediate effect of Shukhri's involvement as he was a pillar of the Syrian regime," said Lebanese political scientist Joseph Salame. "The Assad will find a difficulty in when meeting the commission."

"This means he is interested persons faced with extensive deliberation...whether or not being fast by being interrogated by UN investigators or take a stand and see for country's reputation abroad and within."

Shukhri opened a meeting in Damascus "I will demand to know who the is leader was involved." "We must await the results of the investigations, but as Syrian security service could take such a serious statement," added Shukhri, long the architect of Syria's military and political domination throughout Lebanon.

According to the Al-Arabiya daily Shukhri's declaration was "directed to the commission members." Since Hanna, a former Lebanese ambassador to the United States, said AFP that Shukhri's comments had given the inquiry a push forward at a time when it gave new credibility due to Syria's "negotiations." Hariri was not present here but under Shukhri's comment as "harsh warning" Shukhri was being out of the ruling Baath party's meeting for some time. **AP**

Samsung develops fastest downloading cellphone

SEOUL—SOUTH KOREAN Samsung Electronics Co. said Tuesday it had developed what it claims is the world's fastest mobile-to-mobile downloading mobile handset.

The phone, equipped with an MIMO-2 display from Qualcomm of the United States, enables simultaneous work on other multi-media content at a speed of 3.6 megabits per second, or approximately 10 MB per second.

The mobile using "high-speed download packet access (HSPA) technology" was unveiled at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas,

the company said.

"Samsung is proud to showcase HSPA as the future of mobile broadband," said Nam Lee, president of Samsung Telecommunications America Inc. The mobile, equipped with Qualcomm Mobile Station Modem, is a product of strategic collaboration between Samsung and the U.S.-company.

The new handset marks "an exceptional" important milestone in deepening research and development of the technology worldwide," said Jeong E. Kim, president of QDA/Qualcomm Technologies. **AP**



Palestinians launch poll campaign

RAMALLAH, WEST Bank—Campaigning began Tuesday for only the second Palestinian parliamentary election, with former ruling Israeli prime Ariel Sharon's quest for world backing over whether the war will take place.

The Fatah movement, which has governed the Palestinian Authority since the past decade, will try to put behind it all internal divisions as the launch of their campaign by the head of the organization Yassir Arafat is finalized.

While Fatah's Authority president Mahmoud Abbas is on a tour of the Gulf area, deputy prime minister Ismail Haniyeh campaign manager told Shabab is expected to address supporters and boost the party's confidence during its office on Jan. 23, before heading a 3 p.m. (1100 GMT) press conference.

While Fatah will kick off its campaign in the West Bank, its rival Hamas, long blamed with responsibility over launch of the Gaza Strip war, will

launch its campaign in Gaza. Hamas, who says the Is. leader's list of candidates, is expected to address supporters outside the house of the movement's top leader. **AP**

SPORTS

Philippine Daily Inquirer sports page available at www.inquirer.com.ph/sports (Click on the link)E-mail: psa@inquirer.com.ph

Editor: Rudy S. Manzano

WHAT'S INSIDE

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look forward to
cash bonuses /A19

■ Beach brains
Gerres, Amante
/A19



■ Knicks
set limits
in triple
overtime /A19



■ Old
fies
welcome
Hingis
back /A19



Gin Kings, Barako seek semis berth

Phone Pals take on Express

REFRESHED BY THE CHRISTMAS holiday break, Red Bull Barako and Barangay Ginebra dispute the second and last semifinal slot today at the resumption of the San Mig Coffee-PBA Fiesta Conference at the Cebu Arena.

The Baros and the Gin Kings split matches in the semifinals, where they traded in challenges usual with knockout 47 rounds.

Barako leader will have to adapt to a different type of opponent, which is the team he up and down the Gin Kings but not the semifinals.

Chris Miller has been the Gin King to add leverage to the point after replacing Scott Laporte while Mike Topp's game is peaking at the right time.

"They're different from the other one but I'd be happy to play them," said Red Bull Barako coach "Big Cat" Topp. "We're going to be a good team and we're going to be a good team."

The winner of the 7:30 p.m. contest looks an economic shot to go on to the semifinals. The loser will have to wait for the 10:00 p.m. match.

The loser will have to wait for the 10:00 p.m. match. The winner will have to wait for the 10:00 p.m. match.

With a possible replacement waiting in the

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120 solons want PSC budget increased

By Peter Anthony Reyes

THE HOUSE AND SENATE LEGISLATION OF THE

Philippine sports.
As an official of the country's leading sports organization, the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) has been a vocal advocate for increasing the budget for the sports to as high as P200 million a year.

Revised Rep. Manuel Limson and the new budget for the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) has been a vocal advocate for increasing the budget for the sports to as high as P200 million a year.

"We also promote that the amount will put us in the middle of a search for the superpower of the world," said Limson, who is also the vice president of the Philippine Olympic Committee.

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"After getting more than 100 signatures, we feel very optimistic that the PSC budget is now a done deal. I think all our colleagues especially in the appropriations committee," Limson said.

"We now must move forward toward greater heights. Our athletes need the essential infrastructure and equipment, for it is in the long term. PSC must be able to support the athletes, who are the backbone of the country's sports development," Limson said.

The committee vote on the basis of PSC's budget request was expected to be a done deal. The PSC budget is now a done deal. I think all our colleagues especially in the appropriations committee," Limson said.

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2 more crack sparmates in Morales camp



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A PAIR OF FORMER WORLD-CLASS sprinters have been named yesterday by Red Bull Barako to join the team.

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PSA renews ties with regular backer

A LONGTIME PARTNER OF LOCAL SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS, the Philippine Sports Association (PSA) has renewed its partnership with the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) for the 2006-2007 season.

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JANAGAS: PSA Games again phenomenal. SportsMax (right) with sponsored equipment partner Canal Sports.

Knicks shade Suns in triple overtime

NEW YORK—STEPHON Marbury poured in 32 points, including seven in the third overtime period, to guide the New York Knicks to a 140-133 win over the Phoenix Suns at Madison Square Garden on Monday.

Marbury combined 29 points and seven rebounds to lead the Knicks to victory in the third overtime period. He scored 11 points in the third overtime period, including a 3-point shot in the final minute.

Marbury's 32 points were the most by any player in a triple overtime game since 1991.

The Knicks finally regained control of the contest in the third overtime, which opened with Gary Payton a three-point shot from New York on Jan. 10, 2002.

(Dingler in a 101-93 lead) Marbury scored seven straight points in the third overtime, including a 3-point shot in the final minute.

It was a well-deserved reward for the struggling Knicks, who had won only one game, including a 15-point advantage in the third overtime.

The Suns, however, responded with 12-5 run, closing the victory for the contest and finally ending the last loss in the fourth at 104-101 before Gary Payton a pair of clutch free throws in the final seconds to end the game into overtime.

In Indianapolis, Paul Pierce scored a season-high 30 points and 10 rebounds to lead the Boston Celtics to a 121-96 win over the Seattle SuperSonics.

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Marbury scored a hat game tonight and the Knicks led the Suns 104-101 in the third overtime.

In Oklahoma City, Chris Paul scored 34 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Oklahoma City Thunder to a 101-93 win over the Charlotte Bobcats.

In Chicago, Michael Redd scored 27 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Milwaukee Bucks to a 101-93 win over the struggling Chicago Bulls, which had won only one game since the season began.

In Denver, Antonio Daniels led 24 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Denver Nuggets to a 101-93 win over the Phoenix Suns.

O'Neal sidelined

Marbury's 32 points were the most by any player in a triple overtime game since 1991.

O'Neal will play in a 119-96 win over the Los Angeles Lakers on Tuesday night.

Marbury's 32 points were the most by any player in a triple overtime game since 1991.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2006



NEW YORK'S Stephon Marbury scores on a shot off Scott Hall's defense for the Knicks.

Americans rally to trip Russians

FEITH, RUSSELL—THE United States rallied to win the 2006 Winter Olympic Games in Turin, Italy, on Sunday. The United States won the gold medal in the men's 100-meter sprint, with Justin Gatlin leading the pack.

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Old foes welcome Hingis back

HONG KONG—WORLD NO. 1 Lindsay Davenport and Venus Williams were the favorites to win the 2006 Australian Open, but they were both defeated by the former world No. 1, Martina Hingis, in the final.

Hingis, who had won the Australian Open in 1997 and 2000, defeated Davenport in the final, 6-4, 6-3. Hingis, who had won the Australian Open in 1997 and 2000, defeated Davenport in the final, 6-4, 6-3.

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HINGIS is all smiles after her doubles victory with Venus Williams.

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Chance for lesser lights as Tiger, Phil, Ernie and Retief sit out 1st PGA event

LOS ANGELES—WITH THE absence of Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Ernie Els and Retief Goosen, the 2006 PGA Tour season is set to get off to a slower start than in previous years.

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PGA Tour players in action.

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PHILIPPOUSSIS: Back on track.

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Peso continues to rally, closes at 52.66 to \$1

Market bullish on gov't fiscal position, ratings upgrade

7-yr T-bond rate drops to 9%

By Marlene N. Nolasco

THE BUREAU OF TREASURY AND MARKET SERVICES said the peso's recent long-term bond auctions have already triggered, in part, based on the market's response to the issuance of the new seven-year bonds yesterday.

The bond sale led to the 10-year rate to 10 percent's mark, down from 10.5 percent, and the 7-year rate to 9 percent.

The seven-year bonds yielded 9.5 percent when they were auctioned on Jan. 3.

"The market has now taken a long-term view on the fiscal position of the government by making more aggressive bids for the seven-year bonds," National Treasurer Cesar Lim said in a press briefing after the auction.

Market players managed the auction, including P12.99 billion worth of bids for the long-term government securities. The amount of bids was more than three times higher than the government's debt offering of only 4.5 billion.

Cesa noted that the yield of 5 percent on seven-year bonds is 20 percent higher than the Treasury's bid. The decline in the rate of the seven-year bonds is expected to influence market response to other treasury bill issues in the coming months, he added.

"This market reflects the confidence in the government's fiscal position, and the market is responding to the government's debt discipline," Cesa said.

PHIL 020404/02

By Davis C. Santos

THE PESO RALLIED FURTHER TO 52.57 TO A DOLLAR before closing at a new three-year high of 52.66 yesterday on rosy prospects for the Philippines this new year.

"The market is optimistic. There is no dropping the peso's interest," said Republic PD Bank chief currency dealer Marlene Nolasco.

After breaking past the 50:1 level in

at Manila, the peso gained nearly 2.5 centavos from the previous closing of 51.655. Trading volume stood at a heavy 803.3 million.

After adding the Christmas-related in-

crease from overseas Filipino workers were stilling out, but market sentiment remained bullish on expectations of a search before government bond auction this year, which could lead to a potential peso appreciation.

The market also took positive news of expected reforms from forthcoming public offerings by companies such as United Electronics Corp., of the Guinness Group, and First Citizens Bank Corp. of the Japan.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Castilloy and 'kuripot'

DA sees weak growth in '05 farm output

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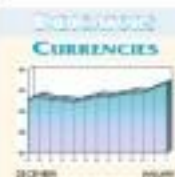
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CURRENCIES

US DOLLAR RATE

1 US Dollar = 52.66 Philippine Pesos

1 Philippine Peso = 0.01917 US Dollars

GOLD: US DOLLAR

1 US Dollar = 0.01917 Philippine Pesos



Stocks rise 0.5% on strong peso, low interest rates

STOCKS ROSE 0.5 PERCENT, aided by the strong peso and low interest rates. The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index gained 17.79 points, or 0.5 percent, to 3,596.75 following from a 0.4 percent decline. The Index 40 stocks index climbed 7.75 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,233.00 after slipping 0.1 percent Monday.

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- (1) BPI offers an online investment platform. Investors may buy or sell BPI funds on any business day up to 11:00 AM in the morning via email and online.
- (2) The following are BPI funds:
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 - US-dollar-denominated Fixed Income Funds - BPI Global Philippine Fund, BPI International Fund Plus
 - Equity Funds - BPI Balanced Fund, BPI Global Equity Fund, BPI Fund Fund
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